

Internal Evidences for Furthering The Tamil Historiography and Chronology

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Introduction

The Sangam and post Sangam literature, the Five Epics contain some specific references about certain details, genealogies and dates of historical personalities and events, which might be useful to rewrite Tamil history and refix chronology. Also, contemporary evidences of other Kings and civilizations throw new light on such reexamination and reconsideration. The archaeological evidences found at different parts of India (including Ancient India and Greater India) have been contradicting and perplexing in the pre-historic and historic interpretations. First literary evidences are analyzed and then, other evidences are correlated to find out the veracity of facts to come to conclusion.

What Sittalai Sattanar Says about Buddha?

Sittalai Sattanar, author of Manimekalai, dha and Mauryan Empire. Buddha is mentioned with different names significantly bringing out the historical facts connected with him.

Name	Reference	Explanation
Vaman	5.75, 30.13	Beautiful-Buddha, who conquered Maran/ Mara
Ariyan	25.6	Aryan denotes Buddha. Therefore, the racial connotation attached to this word is exploded.

Madhavan	21.16	The Great Man of Penance
Buddha		
Gnayiru	12.86; 21.167	Buddha, the Sun
Perarivalan	12.78	A very great intellect
Adisan		
Munivan	7.19	Virtuous Ascetic/Monk
Adi Mud-		
halvan	6.11; 12.108; 30.23	The First First
Adi	29.47	The First Conqueror of Senses
Jinendran		
Periyon	15.22	The Great One
Bodhi	15.29; 21.178	The Enlightened one
Madhavan		under the Bodhi Tree
Pulavon	20.5	Highly Knowledgeable
Nathan	28.71; 89;	
Bodhi	30.24	Embodiment of Knowledge, who got enlightened under the Bodhi Tree
Mulattu		
Nathan		
Murana	30.6	Embodiment of
Tiruvaramurty		Virtues without any contradictions
Sudhakan	28.95	Denotes Buddha

Thus, Buddha is considered as the First of First among all virtues and qualities and elevated to Godhead. These adjective descriptions tally with Jataka and other Buddhist traditions.

The Time and Date of Birth of Buddha

Sittalai Sattanar (M.15.23-25) mentions about the birth of Abuttiran in Javakanadu (Java) with the astronomical position, which is very similar to that of the birth of Buddha as follows:

1. Ilavenir / Early Summer period.
2. Sun was in Rishaba rasi
3. Vaisaka month.
4. Of 27 stars, 13 crossed.
5. In the middle of such stars i.e., at Visaka, as Kartigai is taken as the first star.

This tallies with Buddhist texts, which give the date of birth: He was born on *Isanasaka* 68, Vaikasi month, Friday, a Pauranami day - Full Moon. But, again, here scholars say they do not know what is that *Isanasaka*¹

Interestingly, the Madhavar at Cakravalakotta were surprised to note the astronomical coincidence (M.1531-32) -How Abuttiran could have born on the same day on which Buddha was born? How they knew the birth of Abuttiran in Java from Cakravalakottam of Tamilagam? How they were observing the planetary and star positions and motions? In any case, it is evident that the date of Buddha born at Kapilavastu and Abuttiran born at Java is one and the same. The date of birth of Buddha born at Kapilavastu is determined as -Vaisakha Su.15, Vishakhka, a Friday in March. Full moon ends at 59 gh. 24v.gh. Vaisakhaka ends at 24 gh. Therefore, last Friday i.e., 31st March.

Now, analyze the year of birth of Buddha as mentioned by Sittalai Sattanar in 12th verse / Kathai. 72-82 lines:

"The Devas who are all at Cakravalakottam fell at the feet of the Glorious Deva together prayed. They were told that like a Sun, who dispels all darkness that surrounds the world, "A Very Great Intellect" Perarivalan

would appear in the year of 66 ((2 x 8 x 100) + (2 x 8) = 1600 or mathematical riddle

Here, the expression *Perarivalan* is denoted to Buddha. However, what the year 1616 denotes is not mentioned and the era followed hinted. However, he would not have mentioned the year for fun -(2 x 8 x 100) + (2 x 8) = 1600 + 16 = 1616 or mathematical riddle,

Scholars' Opinion on the Year of 1616 Mentioned in Manimekhalai

The opinion based on the study and research of earlier scholars is given as follows:

1. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer in his commentary, he has noted that to which era, the data belongs to is not known.²

2. N.M. Venkatasamy Nattar and S. Muraisamy Pillai, the authors, have though written commentary, about the year 1616, they say - The year mentioned here belongs to which Era is not known.³ This is the opinion given most of the Tamil scholars.

3. D.S. Triveda, the famous (khyatah) Varahamihira, the Court poet of Vikramaditya of Ujjain was born in B.C. 123 on his own statement, for he says that when 427 years of Saka king had passed, he was on the earth. By subtracting 427 from 550, the epoch of the saka Era, we get B.C.123. If we add 123 to 1616, we come to the date 1793 B.C., which is so near to B.c. 1790, our calculated data of the Lord. The astronomical datum contained in the *Manimekhalai* regarding the asterism may also refer to the fourteenth asterism from Ashlesha which began with the advent of the Kali B.C.3101. But, it is for the Tamil scholars to judge how far my interpretation is nearer to the idea implied in the text. So the fourteenth asterism would be Dhanistha which lasted from B.C.1876 to B.C.1776. And if the Lord's birth is placed in B.C.1870 (1790 + 80), it would fall in the fourteenth asterism as asserted by *manimekhalai*.⁴

Though, he has requested the Tamil scholars to judge his interpretation, it appears, no Tamil scholar has responded to it. Though some Tamil scholars⁵ had earlier attempted to find out the date of Nirvana, they had arrived at the date 494 BCE or about, as they had taken the same sources of the earlier scholars. Surprisingly, they have not even mentioned about the date mentioned in *Manimekhalai*!

Therefore, what this 1616 year denotes? The possibilities are -

1. If it is taken as the year after the birth of Kali, it is equal to $3102 - 1616 = 1486$ BCE.
2. If Saka era is taken, then, it becomes equal to $1616 + 78 = 1694$ BCE.
3. If it is already in Saka year, it is taken as such i.e., 1616 BCE.

Here, it can be noted that these dates are nearly 1200 years before the modern dates fixed by the western scholars.

Another Kovalan During the Period of Buddha

Masattuvan, the father of Kovalan got converted to Buddhism. He conferred that as his son was no more, he decided to convert. However, certain information told by him is interesting in the context. He says that there was another Kovalan, who lived eight generations before the present Kovalan, who built a Caitya in Vanjinagar (M.28:123-136). He was also a friend of Kudakkoc Ceraladhan. Therefore, the possibilities are -

1. If the date of the present Kovalan is taken as first century CE, then, the Kovalan of ninth generation before him must have lived at least 450-500 years before him i.e., 500-450 BCE (taking 50 years for each generation 90×50).

2. As the modern date of Buddha is c.567-487 BCE, he could not have built a Caitya immediately during the period of Buddha.

3. In fact, the Buddhist missionaries of Asoka would have gone to Ceylon only during 3rd century BCE.

4. Either, Kovalan contemporary of Kudakkoc Ceraladhan must have lived after the spread of Buddhism in the ancient Tamilagam or Buddha must have existed before his period so that the Buddhism to become so popular among the Tamils and Kovalan to build a Caitya for Buddha.

Therefore, it is evident that Kovalan of earlier period could have built a Caitya only after the spread of Buddhism in Tamilagam implying that Buddhism was prevalent during that period in Tamilagam, which is not supported by Sangam literature.

Uttara Magadha, Magadha and Famine

Sittalai Sattanar specifically mentions Uttara Magadha and Magadha separately. Their significance is analyzed here.

1. Uttara Magadha - Kanthirpavai says that *Manimekhalai* would be born in Uttara Magadha and she would take only male births to fulfill the virtuous acts and become the first *Savagan* (Srivagan \rightarrow Savagan = a person who listens) / disciple of Buddha (21.175-179). Here, it has to be mentioned that she would move away from Kancipuram, as it would be affected by famine for 12 years.

2. Magadha Buddha would be born as a proud Tilak (on the forehead) of Magadha and harbinger of Kapilampathi / Kapilavastu (26.42-46). He says that Magadha would get rains without forgetting (by Indra). Magadha would get rains, hinting thereby there would not be any droughts or famine, as happened in the past. The *Jaina* texts clearly mention that because of the famine

at Magadha for 12 years, Chandragupta Maurya entrusted the kingdom to one of his sons, Simhasena and proceeded to Sravana-Belgola in Mysore along with Baddrabahu to die fasting according to Jaina tenets.⁶

Again, in another place, it is mentioned that the metal technicians of Magadha came to Tamilagam to build a Mantap along with minute metal workers of Maratta, Blacksmiths of Avanti, carpenters of Yavanam and of course that of experts of Tamilagam (19.107- 111). This also proves the unity and integrity of building technology of Bharat Magadha has been an important commercial centre of India since pre-historic period well connected with all Indian and as well as international business and trade centres.⁷ *Mahavastu*, a Pali text mentions that the brass utensils of Magadha were popular all over Bharat.⁸ Therefore, it is significant the poet has recorded such minute details about the metal technicians of ancient Bharat.

3. Magadha Famous for pre-Asokan Buddhism

Incidentally, Magadha was famous for pre-Asokan Buddhist activities. Pre-Asokan Buddhism was mostly confined to Kosala and Magadha and lesser to Mathura and Ujjaini.⁹ Many Chinese references place Buddhist tradition before Buddha in China. Therefore, the poet need not make *Manimekhalai* to go to Megadha to continue her labour. It can also be interpreted that he was narrating events of pre-Asokan period (273-232 BCE), that is why, perhaps, Asoka is not mentioned in his work.

Thus, it is evident that Sittalai Sattanar was recording such historical events in his works. Therefore, his data about the date of birth of Buddha has to be taken into account carefully to find out the truth.

The "Tramiradeha Sangatana" and Kharavela Inscription

A reference found in the Kharave inscription is "Tramiradeha Sangatana". It has interpreted differently, however, a consensus arrived at that it refers to the defeat of a Dravidian Confederacy. The inscription has been hitherto read differently and the date of the "Dravidian confederacy" arrived at as follows:

K. A. Nilakanta Sastri¹⁰ "The famous Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela (first half of the second century B.C) mentions a league of Tamil states that was 113 years old at the date of the inscription and had been for some time a source of danger to the Kalinga kingdom".

The rendering of the inscription by different scholars are reads as follows:

N. K. Sagu¹¹ *Janapada bhavanam cha tusa vasa saill kataln bhidati TraInIra deha samghataml* (Pali version)

Janapadha bhavanam cha Ira.J'odhasha l'arsha sa/a krutam bhinatti dhranUla desha sangataml (Sanskrit version)

(In the eleventh year...) Also (His Majesty) shattered the territorial confederacy of the Tamil States haing populous villages, that was existing since thirteen hundred years (English rendering).

K. P. Jayaswal *Jana-pada-bhavanam cha terasa-vasa-sata-ketu-Bhada-tit + amara -deha-samghatam*.

"His Highness Ketu who (flourished) thirteen centuries before, which has been established by the Former Kings in the city of Prith=udaka-darbha and is pleasing to the country".

Though, he differs with tile King (s), the number of years is read as "thirteen centuries before" Kharavela.

R. Mukherj¹³⁰⁰ has dealt with the expression "*Tramira daha*" and its relation with Kharavela.

The date of Kharavela varies from 4th cent. BCE to 1st cent. BCE, but Kharavela must have lived at a particular time. The different dates given for Kharavela by different scholars are tabulated as follows:

Author	Date fixed	Source/ reference
B.C. Rajendra Lal Mishra	4 th cent. BCE	Antiquities of Orissa, Vol.II, p.16 ff.
J.F. Fleet	3 rd cent. BCE	JRAS (1910), pp.242ff., 824 ff.
F. Luders	3 rd cent. BCE	Epigraphica India, X, p.161, List.1315
B.C. Bhagwan Lalindraj	2 nd cent. BCE	Actes du sixieme congres International des orientalis- tes, Vol.III, pp.152-177
H.C. Ray Chaudhuri	1 st cent. BCE	Early History of India, pp.187-194
D.S. Sarcar	1 st cent. BCE	Select Inscriptions (1942), p.206

Thus, the important point to be noted is that the territorial confederacy of the Tamil States Was existing since thirteen hundred years. If the date of Kharavela is taken according to different authorities, the existence of the territorial confederacy of the Tamil States goes back to $400 + 1.300 = 1700$ BCE to $100 +$

$1300 = 1400$ BCE. Therefore, the antiquity of the Tamil Kings can be historically goes back to 1700 to 1400 BCE. Hence, the scholars should consider his important aspect and research further about the antiquity of the Sangam period and the Kings of the period in question.

The Relation of Velir with "Tuvurai" and Krishna Kapilar records certain details about Irugovel (Puram. 201: 8-12), which are to be scrutinized critically:

1. Irugovel was born from a Yagna Pit (Tadavu) of a Rishi living in the North.
2. He ruled a city named "Tuvurai", which had walls made of Copper like material.
3. He used to give alms without any discrimination.
4. He descended from the "Velir dynasty", which had in existence for 49 generations before him.

The following points are noted after critical observation:

1. If we take 15/20/25 years as the reign of each generation, then the Velir must have been ruling since $500 + 735 / 500 + 980 / 500 + 1225$ or since 1235/1480/1725 BCE. Incidentally, which tallies with the "Tramiradesa Sanngatham" that threatened the territories of Kharavela as recorded in the Kharavela / Hathigumpā inscription.

2. Surprisingly, the Kharavela's inscription records that he defeated a confederacy of Dravidian Kings, which was threatening his territorial integrity. And that confederacy was 1300 years old during his reign.

3. Interestingly, scholars have hitherto been mentioning that it was 103, 113, 130 or 300 years old, but, actually, the inscription reads that it was 1300 old.

4. If we consider that "Tuvarai"¹⁴ was a famous town in Mysore as revealed through inscriptions existing in 12th century CE, then, the reign of first generation comes to 1st cent. BCE/ 3rd cent. CE/4th cent. CE, which contradicts the Sangam chronology.

5. If we place the first dynasty at par with Mahabharata period, then, each dynasty must have ruled for nearly 40 years (3102-1000=2102/49=42 years), which may not be accepted by the modern scholars. Thus, the 1700-1400 BCE period appears to be reasonable. Then, the Chera King might not be offering food to the soldiers of the Great War as claimed by the Poet, if c.3100 BCE is taken as the date of Mahabharat War and he might have done so.

Mahabharata and Tamil Sangam Kings

The Southern recensions mention Atjuna marrying a Pandyan princess. Specifically, he marries Chitrangathai daughter of Chitravahanan, King of Manalur and begets Papruvahanan through her. She is considered as a daughter of Pandyan King. During Aswametha Digvijaya, Sahadeva comes to South and meets Papruvahanan in Manalur (Sabaparvan). Here, the name of the Pandyan King is mentioned as Malaytdwajan. These details are also mentioned in Vishnu Purana (IV.20), Bhagavatam (10) and Sakandarn (86).

A Pandya king was present in the Swayamvararn of Draupati at Viratapuram (1.189,7020). Yudhisthira describes how Krishna broke the gates of Pandyan King and defeated him (VI.II.398, VII.23.1016). Krishna defeated Cholas (VII.II.321). In Digvijaya, Sahadeva defeated Dravidas, Cholas, Keralas and Pandyas. The Cholas, Dravidas and Andhras were present at the Rajasuya (II.34.1988). Sarangadvaja, the Pandyaraja joined Pandavas in the Great War (V.19.576, 11.50.2084) and was slain by Aswattarna (VI. 23. 1019, VII.21.81). Some

manuscripts mention his name as Sagaradvaja. Keralas and Cholas also fought on the side of Pandyas (VII.455.1893).

P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar¹⁵ mentioning these details notes that there is evidence that there were political relations between north and southern India. M. Raghava Iyengar too gives strong arguments in favour this.¹⁶ Considering the connection, the influence of Mahabharat on the Sangam literature could be noted in historical perspective.

Conches Found in the Ancient Civilizations and the Continued Tradition of Tamizhagam

The famous White Conches (*Chanka / Sangu/ Turbinella Pyrum*) and their ornaments found in the civilizations like Indus Valley¹⁷ (c.6,500 BCE) prove one important factor of existence of trade in the ancient Tamizhagam dated to that period. Conch pearl, conch bangles have been found at the tomb MR3T.21, Mehrgarh, Period 1A, ca.6,500 BCE. The nearest source for this shell is Makran coast near Karachi, 500 km south. However, the tradition of conch procurement and trade continues even today in Tiruchendur¹⁸. As conch bangles are a must for a Bengali marriage, the West Bengal Handicrafts Development Corporation has an office at Tiruchendur to procure conches. Mackay¹⁹ described about a chank /conch artifact -a sprouted conch-like this:

"...a child's feeding cup made from a shell of the shape and date as found at Ur and Kish in Mesopotamia: a Harappan relic"

Similar conch artifacts and conches have been found at Susa used for libations), Tello (Lagash), Persian gulf and other places and their source is India²⁰

The specie, *Turbinella Pyrum* available only in India since time immemorial. Tamil tradition has been replete with many examples

of usage of Conch as feeding cup to children (forming part of ritual), libations in yagnas, samskara and temple rituals, bangle and other ornament manufacturing. Nakkirar confronts Siva by claiming that he belongs to the family which has engaged in cutting the conches. Therefore, besides the Gujarat supply, Tamizhagam would have also contributed to the requirements of the ancient civilizations, as the Coromandel coast had been calm compared to the rough weather of Gujarat / Kutch coast. The traditional pearl and conch divers had been proverbial with the Coromandel coast than other areas. As the tradition of usage of conch in rituals, and ceremonies continues in Tarnizhagam even today, such culture must have spread from India outside.

The Question of Pallavas

The origin of Pallavas and in particular, the Pallavas stone architecture has not been explained by the historians specifically. The recent discoveries of Pallava architectural remains on and off Mahabalipuram has raised the question again. M. W. Carr²¹ Graham Hancock²² and other western scholars have made many references about the submergence of a fabulous antediluvian city at Mahabalipuram swallowed by the waters of a flood. In early sixties, B.Ch.Chhabra²³ has pointed out the perplexing Pallava inscriptions in Pallava Grantha of Sanskrit language and architecture (rock-cut and style) existing simultaneously during the same period 300-800 CE in South India and the South-Asian countries – Malacca, Indonesia (Sumatra, Java, Borneo), Indo-China (Campa, Kambodia) proving that –

1. There must have been close and constant contact and a regular communication by sea between Coromandel Coast and the countries overseas during the material period (300-800 CE).

2. The culture of these countries during this period bears an unmistakable stamp of Pallava influence.

3. Pallavas did not use Saka era, but their own era like Guptas.

4. Bralunanism (the mode of worship) reached first before Buddhism. These points prove that-

1. The naval contact must have been started, established and regularised by shipping with all backing science and technology of navigation, ship-building and stellar studies well before 300 CE, as it could not have happened all of sudden.

2. The movement of population must have been significant, particularly, that of rock cutters, sculptors, inscription writers and Sanskrit scholars. Thus, tile stone art and architecture must have originated, developed and codified much before 300 CE.

3. Pallavas might have been earlier to Saka era (78 CE), i.e., before 1st century CE. As Pallavas influence start recording in 2nd – 3rd centuries CE, they must have gradually raised to power against Satakamis and other contemporary dynasties and rulers.

4. That Hindu religion reached first and Buddhism later is proved by the Sangam literature and the post-Sangam Five Epic literature. The later contains many references about the trade connections, voyages etc., but all in Buddhist (Manimakkalai) and Jain (Jivaka Cintamani) context.

5. Incidentally, the Pallava inscriptions themselves trace the origin to Mahabharata period, as their genealogy has Asvathamam in the list (the pillar inscription of the Vyghrapuram temple - Vayalur inscription. However, the western scholars like G. Jouveau-Dubreuil dub it as mythical.²⁴ However, they insist that Biblical genealogy and chronology historical and apply accordingly even in the Indian context. He goes on to assert that 'the sculpturing of the rocks at

Mahabalipuram started in the year 650 A.D. how then, the Pallava sculptures are existing far away in South-Asian countries? Reginald Le May has also noted the presence Pallava sculpture in South-East Asian countries before Indian Pallavas²⁵ pointing out an existence of a southern route from Kanchipuram either straight across to Mergui and Tenasserim or slightly southwards to Takua-pa and Puket island (Junk Ceylon) or Trang in the Siamese portion of the Malaya Peninsula, or again southwards through the Straits of Malacca to Sumatra, Java and Borneo. Yet another route carried travelers and merchants to Pelambang and Java via the open sea south-west of Sumatra.

Conclusion

From the above literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidences, it appears that the human civilization of Tamizhagam must have existed c.6,500 BCE (based on conch evidences),

c.1,700-1,400 BCE (*Manimekalai*), though, the available stratigraphical evidences do not prove such possibility. Evidently, the archaeological evidence of India appears to have been mixed up with topsy-turvy position. Recently, the Indian dinosaurs has been identified and named as Rajasaurus, as they roamed India. However, the Pallavaram axe-man dated to 1,00,000 YBP (R.B. Foote), megalithic rock paintings dated to c.1,000 BCE, Arickamedu excavations and other evidences give different picture. Had man been existing from 1,00,000 YBP, why he should have taken so many years to become microlithic in c.4,000 BCE, megalithic in c.1,000 BCE, neolithic in c.500 BCE and suddenly classical in c.300 BCE to produce Sangam literature with refined chaste Tamil! Therefore, historians should correlate, corroborate, correspond and then come to a consensus about the critical issue of chronology of India.

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